



BILLING CODE: 3510-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

0648-XE982

Endangered and Threatened Species; Take of Anadromous Fish

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Applications for five scientific research permit renewals and one permit modification.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that NMFS has received six scientific research permit application requests relating to Pacific salmon and steelhead. The proposed research is intended to increase knowledge of species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and to help guide management and conservation efforts. The applications may be viewed online at:

https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov/preview/preview_open_for_comment.cfm.

DATES: Comments or requests for a public hearing on the applications must be received at the appropriate address or fax number (see ADDRESSES) no later than 5 p.m. Pacific standard time on *[insert date 30 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER]*.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the applications should be sent to the Protected Resources Division, NMFS, 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 1100, Portland, OR 97232-1274. Comments may also be sent via fax to 503-230-5441 or by e-mail to

nmfs.nwr.apps@noaa.gov (include the permit number in the subject line of the fax or email).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Rob Clapp, Portland, OR (ph: 503-231-2314), Fax: 503-230-5441, e-mail: *Robert.Clapp@noaa.gov*). Permit application instructions are available from the address above, or online at <https://apps.nmfs.noaa.gov>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Species Covered in This Notice

The following listed species are covered in this notice:

Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*): Endangered upper Columbia River (UCR); threatened Snake River (SR) spring/summer (spr/sum); threatened SR fall.

Steelhead (*O. mykiss*): Threatened UCR; threatened SR; threatened middle Columbia River (MCR).

Sockeye salmon (*O. nerka*): Endangered SR.

Authority

Scientific research permits are issued in accordance with section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and regulations governing listed fish and wildlife permits (50 CFR 222-226). NMFS issues permits based on findings that such permits: (1) are applied for in good faith; (2) if granted and exercised, would not operate to the disadvantage of the listed species that are the subject of the permit; and (3) are consistent with the purposes and policy of section 2 of the ESA. The authority to take listed species is subject to conditions set forth in the permits.

Anyone requesting a hearing on an application listed in this notice should set out the specific reasons why a hearing on that application would be appropriate (see

ADDRESSES). Such hearings are held at the discretion of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, NMFS.

Applications Received

Permit 1339 – 4R

The Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) under the authorization of the Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) is seeking to renew for five years its permit to annually take adult and juvenile SR spr/sum Chinook salmon and SR steelhead while conducting research in a number of the tributaries to the Imnaha River (Cow, Lightning, Horse, Big Sheep, Camp, Little Sheep, Freezeout, Grouse, Crazyman, Mahogany, and Gumboot Creeks), the Grande Ronde River (Joseph Creek, Wenaha and Minam rivers), the Clearwater River (South Fork Clearwater River and Lolo Creek), and the Snake River (Lower Granite Dam adult trap). The Imnaha and Grande Ronde Rivers are in northeastern Oregon, the Clearwater is in Idaho, and the work in the Snake River would take place in Washington. The permit would be a renewal of work the NPT has been conducting for well over a decade in the Northwest.

The purpose of the research is to acquire information on the status (escapement abundance, genetic structure, life history traits) of juvenile and adult steelhead in the Imnaha, Grande Ronde, and Clearwater River basins. The research would benefit the listed species by providing information on current status that fishery managers can use to determine if recovery actions are helping increase wild Snake River salmonid populations. Baseline information on steelhead populations in the Imnaha, Grande Ronde, and Clearwater River basins would also be used to help guide future management actions. Adult and juvenile salmon and steelhead would be observed, harassed, handled,

and marked. The researchers would use temporary/portable picket and resistance board weirs and rotary screw traps to capture the fish and would then sample them for biological information (fin tissue and scale samples). They may also mark some of the fish with opercule punches, fin clips, dyes, and PIT, floy, and/or Tyvek disk tags. Adult steelhead carcasses would also be collected and sampled. The researchers do not intend to kill any of the fish being captured, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the activities.

1341 – 5R

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes (Tribes) are seeking to renew for five years their permit to take SR sockeye salmon and SR spr/sum Chinook salmon while conducting research designed to estimate their overwinter survival and downstream migration survival and timing. The researchers would also conduct limnological studies on the lakes and monitor sockeye rearing. This research—which has been conducted every year since 1996—would continue to provide information on the relative success of the Pettit and Alturas Lakes (Idaho) sockeye salmon reintroduction programs and thereby benefit the listed fish by improving those programs. Juvenile SR sockeye salmon, spr/sum Chinook salmon, and steelhead would be collected at Pettit and Alturas Lakes, ID, using rotary screw traps and weirs. The fish would be sampled for biological information and released or tagged with passive integrated transponders and released. In addition, to determine trap efficiencies, a portion of the tagged juvenile SR sockeye salmon would be released upstream of the traps, captured at the traps a second time, and re-released. The Tribes do not intend to kill any of the fish being captured, but a small percentage may die as an unintended result of the research activities.

1465 – 4R

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) is seeking to renew for five years their permit to annually take juvenile threatened SR steelhead, threatened SR fall Chinook salmon, threatened SR spr/sum Chinook salmon, and endangered SR sockeye salmon during the course of two research projects designed to ascertain the condition of many Idaho streams. The purposes of the research are to (a) determine whether aquatic life is being properly supported in Idaho's rivers, streams, and lakes, and (b) assess the overall condition of Idaho's surface waters. The fish would benefit from the research because the data it produces would be used to inform decisions about how and where to protect and improve water quality in the state. The researchers would use backpack- and boat electrofishing equipment to capture the fish. They would then be weighed and measured (some may be anesthetized to limit stress) and released. The IDEQ does not intend to kill any of the fish being captured, but a small percentage may die as an unintended result of the research activities.

Permit 16521 – 2R

The WDFW is seeking a to renew for five years their permit to annually capture, handle, and release juvenile UCR steelhead and Chinook salmon in the Hanford reach of the Columbia River and near the Tri-Cities, Washington. The purpose of the research is to gather data on fall Chinook abundance, length frequency distribution, and losses in the area. The information collected from these surveys has been used and continues to be used to evaluate protections for juvenile fall Chinook under the Hanford Reach Fall Chinook Protection Program Agreement and gauge the efficacy of the Coded Wire Tagging Program for marking of wild up-river bright fall Chinook in the Hanford Reach.

These surveys can provide biologists and managers with definitive data on the presence or impacts on both non-listed and ESA Listed Chinook and steelhead residing in near shore habitats in this area of the Columbia River. These data, in turn, would be used to help guide management actions for the benefit of the listed species in the future. The researchers would use beach seines and backpack electrofishing equipment to capture the fish. The captured fish would be anesthetized, measured, allowed to recover, and released back to the river. The researchers do not expect to kill any listed fish, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the research activities.

Permit 16446 – 2R

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) are seeking to renew for five years their permit to take MCR steelhead during the course of research designed to monitor listed fish population status in the Walla Walla River watershed, Washington. The data gathered (on fish abundance, trends, genetics, diversity, productivity, and population structure) would be used to inform management decisions regarding land use activities and recovery planning in the Walla Walla sub-basin. The researchers would use rotary screw traps and backpack electrofishing units to capture the fish. At the screw traps, the fish would then be identified, measured, weighed, tissue sampled, and implanted with PIT-Tags (if they do not already have tags). Fish captured via electrofishing would be handled, measured, allowed to recover, and released in a safe area. Some adult carcasses would also be sampled. The researchers do not expect to kill any of the fish being captured, but a small number may die as an unintended result of the research activities.

Permit 18696 – 2M

The Idaho Power company is seeking to modify their five-year permit to annually capture juvenile white sturgeon in Lower Granite Reservoir. The researchers would use small-mesh gill nets and d-ring nets to capture the fish. The gill net fishing would take place at times (October and November) and in areas (the bottom of the reservoir) that have purposefully been chosen to have the least possible impact on listed fish. When the nets are pulled to the surface, listed species would immediately be released (including by cutting the net, if necessary) and allowed to return to the reservoir. The d-ring fishing would take place in June and July, but the same restrictions (immediately releasing listed fish, etc.) would still apply. The research targets a species that is not listed, but the research should benefit listed salmonids by generating information about the habitat conditions in Lower Granite Reservoir and by helping managers develop conservation plans for the species that inhabit it. The researchers are not proposing to kill any of the fish they capture, but a small number of individuals may be killed as an inadvertent result of the activities.

This notice is provided pursuant to section 10(c) of the ESA. NMFS will evaluate the applications, associated documents, and comments submitted to determine whether the applications meet the requirements of section 10(a) of the ESA and Federal

regulations. The final permit decisions will not be made until after the end of the 30-day comment period. NMFS will publish notice of its final action in the *FEDERAL REGISTER*.

Dated: October 21, 2016.

Angela Somma, Chief,

Endangered Species Division,

Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

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